

INL teams with state, industry to recognize exceptional science teaching

Some extraordinary educators from all quarters of Idaho have been singled out in this year's Governor's Industry Award for Notable Teaching of Science (GIANTS) program, which has been supported since its inception by Idaho National Laboratory. The awards acknowledge teachers who bring science to life - inspiring their students to explore, discover and create - while helping bridge the gap between education and industry.

The GIANTS award program is sponsored by the Science and Technology Roundtable, a group of state industry leaders including INL, Micron, Washington Group International, Hewlett-Packard and TreeTop Technologies. With support from the Idaho Department of Commerce and Labor's Office of Science and Technology, the State Department of Education, the Office of the State Board of Education and the Discovery Center of Idaho, GIANTS recognizes three outstanding teachers annually - one each from the high school, middle school and elementary school levels. The program also awards honorable mentions at each school level.

On May 1, Governor C.L. "Butch" Otter presented this year's GIANTS awards at a ceremony at the Discovery Center of Idaho in Boise. Recipients were Gregory Thompson of Lewiston High School, JoAnn Bodell of Clair E. Gale Junior High School in Idaho Falls and Krista Jones of Bellevue Elementary School. Each winner received a \$2,000 cash award. Honorable Mention awards of \$500 each were presented to three additional teachers: Tammy Sewell of West Park Elementary School in Moscow, Norma Johnson of Jerome Middle School and Judy Wages from Bonners Ferry High School.

In his remarks, Otter said, "The recipients of this award represent the model that Idaho needs to link industry and the economic future of Idaho to the classroom through the enhancement of science and technology education."

All of the participating teachers were nominated by the student councils and/or parent groups at their schools. A cash prize of \$500 is given to each school/student council that nominated the GIANTS award recipients, with a cash prize of \$100 going to each school/student council that nominated the Honorable Mention award recipients. In addition, the three GIANTS winners were presented lifetime memberships to the Discovery Center of Idaho and a gift certificate for science equipment or materials.

Photo: Greg Thompson

Dr. Greg Thompson, GIANTS winner from Lewiston High School, with Governor Otter, First Lady Lori Otter and Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Luna.

Dr. Gregory Thompson, the GIANTS awardee for high school, began teaching chemistry and college chemistry at Lewiston High School in 1999. He has been science department head since 2001. Greg emphasizes lab work with his students and teaches them to make accurate and precise measurements, to do many replicates and to keep a notebook in an industry style. Greg sponsors the Lewiston High science club and advises the quiz bowl team. In their nomination letter, the student body leadership said, "Dr. Thompson encourages students to not just stick to the text, but to also go improvise and test their own hypotheses and methods to discover the true scientific process."

[Read](#) the Governor's news release.

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Photo: Krista Jones

Krista Jones of Bellevue Elementary School with Governor Otter, First Lady Lori Otter, Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Luna and Roger Mayes of INL.

Roger Mayes, INL's Deputy Director of Education, Training & Research Partnerships, speaking on behalf of the Science and Technology Roundtable said, "Teachers have always had a tremendous responsibility to prepare young people to take their places in society. But today, more than ever, we need teachers who can inspire students to lives spent in discovery, learning and achievement. Those teachers who excel in this endeavor deserve our support and our recognition."

Award winner Krista Jones, the K-5 science and technology education teacher from Bellevue Elementary School, provides students projects that integrate math, science, technology, social studies and language arts. One of Krista's students said of her class, "To take part in tech, you have to be able to think in new ways and make decisions to figure things out. Mrs. Jones is one of the most spectacular teachers I have ever met in my life."

The GIANTS middle school awardee, JoAnn Bodell, has taught at Clair E. Gale Junior High School in Idaho Falls for 34 years in all areas of science, including honors physical science. She has been the science department chair at the school much of the past 15 years, wrote the life science curriculum for District 91 and assisted with the earth and physical science curriculum. In the nomination letter, one of JoAnn's students said, "She inspired me to like science."

Photo: Bodell and Mayes

JoAnn Bodell of Clair E. Gale Junior High School and Roger Mayes, INL.

